LIFE IN BRAZIL

Difficulties that Beset Newly-Arrived Foreigners.

MANY INTERESTING SCENES

Pewter Plates and Brass Key Tags for Currency—Bills that Look Big, but Amount to Little.

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, March 17, 1892.—[Special correspondence of THE SUNDAY HERALD.]—As in all countries where heavy duties are imposed on imported goods, Rio's port regulations are extremely rigorous and often vexatious. All incoming vessels are required to drop anchor off Fort Villegagnon—commonly known as the Pico—and there await the coming of the health and custom officials. Those gentlemen take their own leisurely time for it, and their convenience must be awaited, however imperative your reasons for expedition. If the steamer happens to have arrived near the dinner hour—5 p.m. is the Brazilian rule for that most important meal—or near the fashionable time for promenading in the Rua do Ouvidor, say an hour earlier; or if a fiesta happens to be in progress, or one of the political demonstrations so numerous in the republic—no attention will be paid to it till some time next day, and meanwhile, no communication whatever is permitted between the ship and the shore, not even so much as a message to waiting friends or letters to catch an out-going mail.

Should quarantine be imposed, as it is more than likely to be during

SEASONS OF EPIDEMIC,

though there may not be a case of sickness on board, the vessel is sent back to Ilha Grande, sixty miles down the coast. There is no accounting for quarantine regulations, especially in times of scare. We experienced their unreasonableness to the full a few years ago, when sailing among the West Indies. Because our ship had passed a place where small-pox was raging—though no passengers were taken on there and nobody went ashore but the purser on his regular business—we were not allowed to come within three miles of any port. Though not a soul on board was ill, we could not visit Martinique, Barbadoes, St. Thomas, nor any of the places we had come so far to see; nor send ashore for the longed-for home letters waiting in the consul's office, nor dispatch those we had written during the voyage. Passengers who must land were compelled to spend fifteen days at the quarantine station—a pest house to which were consigned the leaprous and diseased of every class and all nationalities, in which the chances were few for a person who entered in perfect health to come out alive at the end of half a month.

Among our number was a charming French family, who had been visiting in Para and who were coming to their home at St. Pierre. Of course they were obliged to disembark at Martinique, and a mournful procession they made—husband, wife, four children and three servants, being rowed away to

THE DESERT QUARANTINE ISLAND

in the custody of officers, like criminals, headed by the yacht of the health commissioner with its significant yellow flag. Though the family were rich and influential and all in good health, nothing could save them—simply because they happened to take passage on a steamer that had stopped at an infected port several hundred miles below the place where they embarked. A year later, happening to meet again the captain of the same steamer on a more fortunate voyage, I inquired after the quarantined family; and learned with sorrow that the husband and three of the children died of yellow fever contracted at the pest house.

About ten years ago the Brazilian authorities erected a costly quarantine station on Grand island—Ilhe Grande—and have got their money back long ago from the charges, fixed by law, for their compulsory boarders. The rates are as follows: First class passengers must pay 5,000 reis per diem for semi-starvation on villainous food; second class, 2,500 reis; third class, 800 reis; children between four and ten years old, half rates; and between one and four years, one third rates. Then all the baggage must be disinfected, the charges being 1,000 reis per kilogramme—and the ordinary saratoga will weigh many kilogrammes. It is useless to protest that nothing is the matter with your luggage, and you don't

WANT IT DISINFECTED

—it must undergo the process or be dumped into the bay, and you must pay for it all the same. In cases of merely quarantine observations, which is usually from twenty-four to forty-eight hours, the vessel is required to anchor off Jurujuba point; but that is no hardship if one's business is not urgent, for the glorious view amply compensates for being compelled to endure sea food and a stuffy state room a while longer. The ship lies in what the old navigators called the "Fathom bay," between Icarahy beach, which is famed alike for its beauty and its bathing, and the rocky peninsula which is crowned by the celebrated Fortaleza de Santa Cruz. One never wearies of this magnificent harbor, which far surpasses that of Naples or the Golden Horn. The whole bay, 100 miles in circumference, is surrounded by peaked and turreted hills, standing one behind another in every conceivable position—some bare, others covered with verdure, and all with palm trees growing at their feet. Most prominent, because nearest, among the dark hills looming close on every side is the Pao do Assucar—Sugar Loaf—so smooth and sharp that its conical peak does not appear to be more than twenty feet in diameter. It is the extreme and highest point of a range of granite hills that extend a short distance along the coast, separated from the larger range back of the city by a narrow valley, in which has been built the aristocratic suburb called Botofoga. Just behind the Sugar Loaf is the gap known as Prain Vermilha—Green Valley—where the first Portugese settlement on Botofoga was located, in the year 1565. It is strongly fortified and is the slight of the Imperial military academy. A rocky peninsula juts out from the base of the Sugar Loaf, and on it is the Fortaleza de S. Joao and some extensive barracks. Some of the batteries belonging to this Saint John's Fort are cut into the solid rock and are said to be among the strongest in the world. The Fortaleza de Santa Cruz, under whose frowning walls the vessel is anchored, is

BRAZIL'S MOST IMPORTANT STRONGHOLD

—a perfect Gibraltar in strength and inaccessibility, and as picturesque as formidable. It was built in 1696, but has since been greatly enlarged and strengthened. It holds a large garrison, and is well armed with modern cannons of the most approved type. Standing at the foot of two rocky peaks, it is further defended on the outside beach by a strong water battery, while the summit above is capped by a small but impregnable Forte de Pico. The only approach to the Pico fortification is through the Santa Cruz fortress below; and that, in turn, is assailable only by water.

Then there is the Fortaleza de Lage, built upon a partially submerged rock near the narrow entrance—the site of the first attempted settlement in the "River of January." Its fortification, constructed about 850 years ago, possesses no great strength, but its position gives it great advantage. In its dungeons, hollowed out of the solid rock below sea level, prisoners of state used to be incarcerated; and gruesome tales are told of how a part of the punishment consisted of letting the water in at regular intervals, when the wretched prisoners were obliged to swim for their lives or drown like rats in a hole.

A little fishing village, as primitive and drowsy as though the metropolis of Brazil were hundreds of miles away instead of close at hand, occupies the shore of Jurujuba bay; and, following the coast line as far as the eye can reach, are other villages, forts, batteries, naval stations and splendid government buildings—many of the latter constructed of the beautiful white marble from the near-by quarries of the Morro de Gloria. The island of Villegagnon, which lies almost in front of the entrance to the bay, its quadrilateral fort protected by water batteries, well armed with modern guns, was the site of the first settlement of Rio de Janeiro in 1555. After permission has been given by the autocrats of the custom house for free practique with the shore, the mails are first disembarked; and then the steamer proceeds to the upper anchorage, where the passengers and their luggage are discharged.

CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

are at once put on board, who remain night and day at their posts until the steamer is again ready for sea. All baggage is sent directly to the custom house, near the Caes dos Minerros, where passengers can claim it at any time between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Nothing can be passed on board without special permission, not even your hand-bag or shawl strap. It is a wise plan to pack the few things needed for a day or two into a grip sack and leave the trunks to their fate until you are established in a hotel and equal to engaging in the customary wrestle at the Caes. One should remember that passports are required, both on entering and leaving Brazil, and no steamship company is permitted to sell a ticket to a foreigner until his passport has been properly viewed at the Central police station. For that no charge is made, though the passport cost a dollar at the department of state at Washington, and another dollar for the oath before a notary that you are not somebody else—a specimen of "red tape" equal to that which compels needy females who are so fortunate as to secure a $75-clerkship in Uncle Sam's treasury to make oath—and pay for the same—that they have "never borne arms against the government." Recently Rio's police authorities have adopted a regulation requiring a consular vise before their own, and this involves a slight expense.

There is also a port regulation which forbids any communication with vessels in the harbor after 8 p. m. without a special permit. Therefore, if you are unacquainted with

THE PORTUGESE LANGUAGE

and have gone ashore merely for a look about town, you would better keep your eye on your watch and not put faith in the rosy lights that linger long on the mountain tops after the sun has disappeared—unless you want to spend some uncomfortable hours in prison and require the services of the United States consul in the morning; and meanwhile the ship may sail away without you.

Passengers will find no difficulty in finding boats to take them ashore, for as soon as a steamer stops it is surrounded by them like flies around a molasses barrel. The Rio boatmen drive a roaring trade at all seasons, and it is one of their humerous practices to land passengers for a moderate sum and then refuse to take them back until the helpless travelers have, in effect, transferred to them a chattel mortgage of all the worldly goods of which they stand at that moment possessed. The boatmen have the best of it every time, being in league with one another, especially when their victims have acted as passengers generally do and staid on shore until the very last minute before the ship is to sail. The common price, each way, is 2,000 reis, though two passengers are often carried on the one fare. The law requires all boats to be numbered and registered, as are all the public vehicles and carregadores—porters—in the city; and it is well to make a note of these in case any misunderstanding shall arise.

While we lingered on the massive stone dock that lines the water front of Rio, we noticed

A VERY CURIOUS STEAM YACHT

close by, painted white, with open galleries and a strange flag flying. We wondered with languid interest what it could be, but did not inquire, there being none but Portugese-speaking people on hand. Presently an ambulance drove down to it, and a litter with a sick man on it was hauled out by some uniformed persons and put on board. Everybody fell back with a most surprising show of respect—everybody but ourselves; we wanted to see what was going on—utter silence fell for a moment upon the noisy throng, and I thought within myself that I had never seen wharf-loafers display so little intrusive curiosity. Was it some member of the royal family—some noble but invalid relative of the late Dom Pedro going out for an airing in his private yacht! Just then the Purser, looking somewhat pale, came hurrying up. "For heaven's sake," he cried, "Why didn't you get out of the way when that thing went by?" "What thing," we innocently asked. "Why the hospital yacht, to be sure, loaded down to the guards with small-pox and yellow fever.

The first place on shore that a foreigner generally seeks is the establishment of some money-changer, in order to convert his American gold or English sovereigns, or the coin of the last country he visited, into the "circulating medium" of Brazil. And very much astonished will be be when the changer hands over a huge pile of metal—copper, brass, iron and nickle, that looks like old pewter plates, stove-lids and the ponderous brass tags that landlords sometimes attach to doorkeys to prevent them from being carried off in the pockets of their patrons. A very few American dollars, exchange added, when converted into the currency of this country, requires a cart, rather than a pocket-book, in which to take it away. Brazil still adheres to the absurd old Portugese system of financial enumeration, in which it takes two thousand reis to make what we call half a dollar, the word "reis" being the plural of real. When reis are at par, one hundred of them are worth about five cents American money. What a hard time of it Brazilian book-keepers must have, with the long lines of figures which represent the ordinary commercial transactions of a banking or mercantile house. For example, a real, the unit of the monetary system, is written 0$001 and is equal to the value of one twentieth of the United States cent. There is no such coin in circulation, the smallest being 10 reis.

THERE IS A COPPER COIN

of 40 reis, and nickle coin of 100 reis, and another of 200 reis. Next comes the paper money in notes of 1,000 reis, called milreis. There are two milreis, five, ten, twenty, thirty, fifty and one hundred, to a maximum of five hundred milreis, numerically expressed this way—500$000. Then there is an imaginary denomination named a conte, which means a thousand milreis, and is expressed in paper 1:000$. The par value of the paper milreis is equal to about 54 cents American money; but of course it varies with the times. On the day of the revolution, November 15th, 1889, it was at par, and has never been since. A while ago it was down to 17 cents, and to-day it is up to 28 cents.

A copper coin of the old monarchy worth half a cent still circulates largely in northern Brazil, which is fit only to use in driving nails, or for paper weights, being altogether too heavy to carry in any pocket. Though they lay around ever so carelessly nobody ever steals them, being too burdensome to get away with. On enquiring the price of living at an hotel, you are at first amazed to find that it is so many milreis per diem; and are absolutely staggered when the laundry bill is presented in six figures. Fancy a full proportioned bank-note worth five cents. It takes eight of these hundred milreis bills to pay for a horse-car ride out to the botanical gardens and back. In course of that rather long drive you will observe that the conductors' pockets, and the breast of his coat bulge out more and more with the bank notes, till by the time he is oppressed with a dollar and a half, he looks like a carelessly-stuffed scare-crow.

One of the bills closely resembles the "greenback" that is so dear to our souls, and has engraved upon its back, sides, margins and four corners the satisfying figures 500. The possession of a few of these makes one feel like a bloated bond-holder—until he learns from sad experience how little they will buy. This Brazilian greenback bears the words *Quinhentos Reis, Imperio do Brazil*, and an excellent likeness of poor Dom Pedro—as does nearly all the paper money of the country, though even the billious-looking flag—all green-mold and yellow fever color—with its cross of the order of Christ, and the sphere of the old Portugese explorers, has changed somewhat since the monarchy was murdered.

Speaking of these deceptive bills

REMINDS ME OF A STORY

that is told of a late United States consul to Bahia, Brazil, which is worth repeating. As the departing consul stepped aboard the steamer, he handed to his "tenderfoot" successor one of those tempting-looking "500," bills. "Take it, take it," he said with sympathetic feeling, when the other would have rejected so much proffered wealth. "Settle with my creditors, if I leave any behind, and never mind about the change. Just treat the boys in my name whenever they call, and keep my memory green." It happened that a lot of "the boys" dropped in that afternoon, and the joke cost the new consul the value of a pocket-full of those bills, they being worth at the time exactly 25 cents each.

So far as I am aware, there is but one currency in the world more infinitesimal than that of Brazil, and that is the ante-diluvian small shells called cowries, which circulate as money in Africa and India, a cowrie being equal to about one-fiftieth of an American cent. FANNIE B. WARD.

NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL.

E. V. Wood, of McKee's Rocks, Allegheny county, Pa., in speaking to a traveling man of Chamberlain's medicines, said: "I recommend them above all others. I have used them myself and know them to be reliable. I always guarantee them to my customers and have never had a bottle returned." Mr. Wood had hardly finished speaking when a little girl came in the store with an empty bottle. It was labeled "Chamberlain's Pain Balm." The traveler was interested, as there was certainly a bottle coming back, but waited to hear what the little girl said. It was as follows: "Mamma wants another bottle of that medicine; she says it is the best medicine for rheumatism she ever used." 50 cent bottles for sale by Z. C. M. I. drug department.

The largest and finest stock of Fancy Groceries at Rogers & Co.'s.

Try our chow chow. S. L. Pickle Co.

The special quality of Ayer's Hair Vigor is, that it restores the natural growth color and texture of the hair. It vitalizes the roots and follicles, removes dandruff, and heels itching humors in the scalp. In this respect, it surpasses all similar prep arations.